

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
WESTERN DISTRICT OF OKLAHOMA  
[www.okwd.uscourts.gov](http://www.okwd.uscourts.gov)

# ELECTRONIC FILING POLICIES & PROCEDURES MANUAL



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ELECTRONIC FILING

POLICIES & PROCEDURES MANUAL

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## INTRODUCTION

It is the policy of the United States District Court for the Western District of Oklahoma to require attorneys and other permitted registrants to file papers with the Court electronically, except as may be stated herein. Docket sheets and most documents may be viewed electronically through the Public Access to Court Electronic Records (“PACER”) system, regardless of participation in the Electronic Case Filing (“ECF”) System. The following Policies and Procedures govern electronic filing in this District unless, due to circumstances in a particular case, the assigned Judge determines that these procedures should be modified.

### I. ELECTRONIC FILING SYSTEM

#### A. GENERAL POLICY.

With limited exceptions, all papers submitted for filing in this Court in civil and criminal cases shall be filed electronically using the Court’s ECF System.

1. **Pro Se Litigants.** Litigants proceeding *pro se* (without attorney representation) may not file electronically. *See* § II.I.
2. **Conventional Filing.** For good cause shown, an attorney may apply to the assigned Judge for permission to file documents conventionally. Even if permission to file papers conventionally is granted, that permission may be withdrawn at any time.
3. **Modifications and Amendments of Court’s ECF System Procedures.** The assigned Judge may modify these procedures in

specific cases without prior notice, if deemed appropriate. The Court may also amend these procedures at any time without prior notice. Modifications and amendments to ECF System Policies and Procedures will be posted on the Court's website at [www.okwd.uscourts.gov](http://www.okwd.uscourts.gov).

**B. REGISTRATION.**

Only those persons registered with the Court's ECF System will be able to file papers electronically with the Court.

1. **Who May Register.** Only attorneys who are admitted to practice in the Western District of Oklahoma or others authorized by the Court (*e.g.*, receivers, mediators, those admitted *pro hac vice*, United States Probation Officers, United States Deputy Marshals) may register for access to the Court's ECF System.
2. **How to Register.** To register for an account on the Court's ECF System, you must have an upgraded, individual account with the PACER system and must follow the instructions at: <https://www.okwd.uscourts.gov/nextgen-information/>.
3. **E-mail Address.** The registrant's e-mail address will be the address used for service, and transmission through the ECF System to that address of a Notice of Electronic Filing ("NEF") will constitute service. The registrant may also provide additional e-mail addresses to which courtesy copies of ECF notices will be sent.

4. **Changes of E-Mail Address.** The registrant is responsible for updates to all e-mail addresses associated with the registrant's account. To update information, log in to the "Manage Your Account" tab on PACER <https://pacer.uscourts.gov/>. Any change to the registrant's primary e-mail address will also require compliance with LCvR5.4 and LCrR49.4.

**C. USER NAMES AND PASSWORDS.**

The combination of the registrant's user name and password serves as the registrant's official signature for purposes of the Federal Rules of Civil and Criminal Procedure and any applicable statute or regulation of the United States.

1. **Responsibility.** Once registered, the registrant is responsible and accountable for all documents filed using that user name and password.
2. **Security.** No registrant shall permit the user name and password to be utilized by anyone other than persons specifically authorized by the registrant. If a password is believed to be compromised, the registrant must notify the Clerk's Office during normal office hours by telephone at 1-405-609-5555 or toll free at 1-888-609-6593 or by e-mail at [helpdesk@okwd.uscourts.gov](mailto:helpdesk@okwd.uscourts.gov) and must change the password immediately using PACER'S "Manage Your Account" tab.

## II. ELECTRONIC FILING AND SERVICE OF DOCUMENTS

### A. FILING.

#### 1. General Rules.

- a. The official Court record shall be the electronic file maintained by the Clerk and any documents or exhibits filed conventionally.
- b. Electronically filed documents must meet the requirements of the Federal Rules of Civil and Criminal Procedure and this Court's Local Rules. To electronically file a document, it must be in .pdf format, which can be created either by scanning the document or printing it to .pdf format. Electronically filed documents must also be text-searchable and flattened. For information on how to flatten a document, see § V.
- c. **Conventionally Submitted Documents to be e-filed by Court staff.**

There are certain documents in civil and criminal cases that shall be conventionally submitted. Court staff will file these documents on the ECF System. These documents are:

- i. Indictments;
- ii. Pleadings and other papers submitted for filing by *pro se* litigants.



- d. **Documents to be e-filed by the Court staff.**  
There are certain documents in criminal cases that will be provided to the Court electronically, e.g. criminal complaints and informations. Court staff will file these documents on the ECF System.
- e. **Documents that counsel may file conventionally.** Leave of Court is not required for counsel to conventionally file any document listed below; however, counsel must electronically file a Notice of Conventional Filing. A model form is on the Court's website at [www.okwd.uscourts.gov/forms.htm](http://www.okwd.uscourts.gov/forms.htm).
- i. Administrative records and transcripts, except the administrative record in Social Security cases;
  - ii. Documents larger than 50 megabytes when converted to .pdf format that cannot be separated into less than 50-megabyte segments;
  - iii. Emergency matters at the discretion of the Clerk.
- f. E-mailing a document to the Clerk or to the assigned Judge shall not constitute filing of the document. An electronically filed document shall not be considered filed for purposes of the Federal Rules of Civil or Criminal Procedure until an ECF System-generated NEF is transmitted to the filer.
- g. ECF registrants may file papers 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Filing a paper electronically does not, however, alter the filing deadline for that paper. If the assigned Judge has ordered

the document to be filed by a time certain, it must be filed by that time. Otherwise, a filing must be completed **before midnight Central time on the date it is due** (excluding weekends, holidays, and days when the Clerk's Office is inaccessible) to be considered timely filed.

**2. Initiating Documents in Civil Cases.**

- a. All Initiating Documents (*e.g.*, complaints, notices of removal, state court filings in removal cases, applications to proceed *in forma pauperis*, miscellaneous proceedings, summonses, and civil cover sheets) shall be submitted as separate .pdf files to the following e-mail address: [newcases@okwd.uscourts.gov](mailto:newcases@okwd.uscourts.gov). Each .pdf file shall be named with a description of the document (*e.g.*, civil cover sheet, complaint). If subsequent summonses are needed after a case has been opened, the additional summons should be sent to the new cases e-mail address.
- b. In removed actions, all documents required by 28 U.S.C. § 1446(a), along with a copy of the state court docket sheet, shall be submitted to the new cases mailbox as separate .pdf files attached to the notice of removal, and shall be clearly labeled and named with a description of the document (*e.g.*,

Exhibit 1: State Court Docket Sheet; Exhibit 2: Petition; Exhibit 3: Answer).

- c. Upon receipt of the Initiating Documents, the Clerk's Office will contact the filing party regarding payment of the filing fee. New civil cases will be deemed filed as of the date they are received in [newcases@okwd.uscourts.gov](mailto:newcases@okwd.uscourts.gov) provided all papers submitted for filing are received before midnight Central time, are in proper format, and (i) payment of the filing fee is tendered within 3 business days of filing or (ii) a motion to proceed *in forma pauperis* is submitted with the initiating documents.
- d. Summonses must be submitted using the form provided on the Court's website, [www.okwd.uscourts.gov/forms.htm](http://www.okwd.uscourts.gov/forms.htm), and must be complete.
- e. A party may not electronically serve the summons and complaint, but instead must perfect service according to Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 4.

### **3. Filing Fees.**

- a. Any fee required for filing a document is payable to the Clerk by credit card, check, Pay.gov, money order, or cash. The Clerk will not maintain electronic billing or debit accounts.

- b. Unless payment is made via Pay.gov, upon receipt of the filing of any paper requiring payment of a fee, the Clerk's Office will contact the filing party regarding payment of the filing fee.

**4. Exhibits, Attachments, and Appendices.**

- a. Exhibits and attachments that are filed electronically shall be submitted as separate attachments to the document and shall be clearly labeled with the appropriate exhibit number (*e.g.*, Exhibit 1, Exhibit 2). Do not use alphabetical or alpha-numeric designations for exhibits. A description of the numbered exhibit must be provided in the docket entry (*e.g.*, Exhibit 15: January 2004 Contract).
- b. An appendix of exhibits and attachments may be filed as a separate document. The cover page shall state the name of the document related to the appendix (*e.g.*, Appendix to Defendant Doe's Motion for Summary Judgment). Exhibits must be submitted as described in § II.A.4.a above.
- c. Exhibits, attachments, and appendices that are not available in or convertible to .pdf format must be filed conventionally. In addition, as the Court's ECF System automatically rejects filings that are greater than 50 megabytes, documents that exceed 50 megabytes when converted to .pdf format must be filed conventionally. To the extent possible, however, the filer

should separate documents that are greater than 50 megabytes into smaller segments (*e.g.*, Exhibit 1 - Part 1; Exhibit 1 – Part 2). Whenever a document or item is conventionally filed by an ECF registrant, the filer shall electronically file a Notice of Conventional Filing. A model form is on the Court’s website at [www.okwd.uscourts.gov/forms.htm](http://www.okwd.uscourts.gov/forms.htm).

5. **Courtesy Copies.** If an electronically filed document, together with attachments, exhibits, or appendices, including sealed exhibits related to the filing, exceeds **40 pages**, the filer shall deliver 1 paper copy of the document, which shall include any sealed exhibits related to the filing, to the Clerk’s Office within **1 business day** of the date of filing (excluding holidays and days when the Clerk’s Office is inaccessible), unless the filer’s office is located more than 50 miles from the courthouse, in which case the paper copy shall be delivered to the Clerk’s Office within 3 business days of the date of filing. Items attached to the paper copy should be identified with corresponding tabs that match the exhibit number. The paper copy shall be bound at the left-hand margin in a manner that will permit it to be opened flat. The copy must have the CM/ECF header at the top of each page to show that the document was filed.

**B. SERVICE.**

**1. Service Through the ECF System.**

- a. Whenever a document is filed electronically in accordance with these procedures, the ECF System will transmit an NEF to the filing party and any other party who is a registered participant of the ECF System. No NEF will be generated for *ex parte* matters or in sealed cases. A sealed document in a public case will generate an NEF; however, the document will not be accessible by the public.
- b. NEFs will not be transmitted to an attorney who has been permitted to withdraw from a case. Should counsel desire to continue to receive NEFs, they can add the case to their email preferences through Utilities.

**2. Service by Conventional Means.**

- a. A party who is not a registered participant of the ECF System is entitled to a paper copy of any electronically filed document. The filing party must provide non-registered parties with a copy of the document in accordance with the Federal Rules of Civil or Criminal Procedure.
- b. Counsel may serve any electronically filed document on a party who is not a registered participant by e-mail, if the recipient has consented to such service in writing.

c. A party who files a document on a date the case is scheduled for trial or hearing must – prior to the commencement of the proceedings – provide a copy of that filing to the Court and any other party involved in the trial or hearing.

**3. Certificate of Service.** No certificate of service is required when a document is served by filing it with the Court’s ECF System. When a document is served by other means, a certificate of service stating the manner in which service will be accomplished must be filed. Sample language for a certificate of service is on the Court’s website at [www.okwd.uscourts.gov/forms.htm](http://www.okwd.uscourts.gov/forms.htm).

**C. SIGNATURES.**

**1. Attorney Signature.**

a. A document requiring an attorney’s signature shall be signed by at least one attorney of record above the signature block in one of the following ways: (1) with an original signature that is then scanned; (2) with an electronic signature; or (3) with “s/ (attorney name).” The correct format for an attorney signature is as follows:

Scanned Signature, Electronic Signature, or s/ Attorney Name  
Attorney Name  
Bar Number: xxxx  
Attorney for (Plaintiff/Defendant)  
ABC Law Firm  
xxx South Street  
Oklahoma City, OK 73102

Telephone: (xxx) xxx-xxxx  
E-mail Address for Service

- b. Users are cautioned that some proprietary secure signature applications are incompatible with the ECF system and signatures inserted with such software may not appear as intended.

**2. Multiple Signatures.** Documents that are submitted on behalf of more than one attorney may be signed as follows:

- a. **Approval for Electronic Signature.** The attorney whose user name and password are being used to file the document (“filing attorney”) may obtain approval from any other attorney to state that the other attorney has authorized the filing attorney to electronically sign the document. Such approval shall be indicated as follows:

<u>s/ Attorney’s Name</u> (Signed by Filing Attorney with permission of Attorney)	<u>Filing Attorney’s Signature</u> (see § II.C.1 for signature options)
---	---

The filing attorney is responsible for maintaining a record of when and how permission was obtained to sign the other attorney’s name until all appeals have been exhausted or the time for seeking appellate review has expired.

- b. **Approval by Signature.** The filing attorney may obtain and maintain a paper copy of the document signed by the other



attorney. Possession of a signed copy shall be indicated as follows:

<u>s/ Attorney's Name</u> (Signed copy of document bearing signature of Attorney is being maintained in the office of Filing Attorney)	<u>Filing Attorney's Signature</u> (see § II.C.1 for signature options)
---	--

The filing attorney shall maintain the signed copy of the document until all appeals have been exhausted or the time for seeking appellate review has expired.

**3. Non-Attorney Signature.**

a. **In General.** Documents signed by persons who are not counsel of record (*e.g.*, verified pleadings, contracts, affidavits) may be submitted in .pdf format in any of the following ways if the filer maintains the signed original until all appeals have been exhausted or the time for seeking appellate review has expired:

i. An electronic version of the document bearing “s/ (name)” can be filed along with a statement that the filer has the signed original, for example:

s/ Plaintiff Smith\*

*\*I certify that I have the signed original of this document, which is available for inspection at any time by the Court or a party to this action.*

Filing Attorney's Signature

(see § II.C.1 for signature options)

- ii. An electronic version of the document bearing “s/ (name)” can be filed with a scanned copy of the signature page as an attachment.
- iii. If the document containing original signatures is not digitally available, it may be scanned and filed electronically.

b. **Signatures in Criminal Cases.** Several documents in criminal cases require the signature of a non-attorney, such as a grand jury foreperson, a defendant, a third-party custodian, a United States Marshal, or an officer from Pretrial Services or Probation. Signatures on indictments and signatures by criminal defendants must be original signatures; such documents will be scanned and filed electronically by Court staff. Signatures for other persons in criminal cases may be affixed using any of the options permitted in § II.C.1.

**4. Signature Disputes.** Anyone who disputes the authenticity of any signature must file an objection to the document within 7 days of service.

**D. TITLE OF DOCKET ENTRIES.**

When creating a document to be filed electronically, the filer shall use a title that matches one of the docket event categories contained in the ECF Menu, which is on the Court’s website at [www.okwd.uscourts.gov](http://www.okwd.uscourts.gov).

This same docket event category shall be used when filing the document.

## **E. FILING ERRORS.**

- 1. Changes after Submission.** Once a document is submitted and becomes part of the case, the ECF System will not permit the filer to change the document or the docket entry.
  
- 2. Notification of Mistakes.** Filers should make every effort to ensure they do not file a document other than the one intended to be filed, that it is filed in the correct case, and that it does not contain information that should have been redacted or filed under seal. The Clerk's Office should be notified of any mistakes by telephone at 405-609-5555 or toll-free at 1-888-609-6593 or by e-mail at [helpdesk@okwd.uscourts.gov](mailto:helpdesk@okwd.uscourts.gov).  
  
The notifier should provide the Clerk's Office with the case number and docket number of the erroneous entry. The filer should not refile the document unless directed to do so.
  
- 3. Personal Identifiers.** If a document containing personal identifiers is filed erroneously, a Motion for Order Sealing Document and Directing the Filing of a Redacted Documents shall be filed. The form motion and the proposed order may be found on the Court's website at [www.okwd.uscourts.gov/forms.htm](http://www.okwd.uscourts.gov/forms.htm).

## **F. TECHNICAL FAILURES.**

### **1. Court's ECF System.**

- a. A technical failure exists when the ECF System is unable to accept filings over the course of any period of time greater than 2 hours after 12:00 noon that day. The ECF System will be unable to accept filings during periods of routine system maintenance. To minimize disruption, routine system maintenance typically occurs on weekends during early morning hours (and does not occur every weekend). Check the Court's website for postings regarding any ECF System outages.
- b. Should a filing be untimely because of a technical failure of the Court's ECF System, the filer may seek appropriate relief from the assigned Judge.

- 2. Filer's System.** Problems on the filer's end, such as phone line problems, problems with the filer's Internet Service Provider, or hardware or software problems, will not constitute a technical failure under these procedures or excuse an untimely filing. Upon a showing of good cause, the assigned Judge may grant appropriate relief for an untimely filing.

## **G. ORDERS AND PROPOSED PAPERS.**

### **1. Orders Initiated by the Court.**

- a. All orders shall be in text-searchable .pdf format.
- b. The Judge may affix an electronic signature, sign using “s/ Judge Name,” or scan a copy of the signature page as an attachment to the order. Any order signed electronically has the same force and effect as if the Judge had signed a paper copy of the order.

### **2. Proposed Papers Submitted by the Parties.**

- a. When a party is required to file a proposed order, (i) the motion to which the proposed order pertains must be filed prior to submitting the proposed order, and (ii) the proposed order must refer to the docket entry number for the motion. Proposals sent to the Court must be copied to all other counsel of record and *pro se* parties. *See* LCvR5.5.
- b. All proposed papers submitted by the parties shall be in a format compatible with Microsoft Word. Proposals in .pdf format will not be accepted. All proposed papers other than proposed sealed orders shall be submitted via the designated mailbox for the assigned Judge as indicated below. Unless otherwise authorized, such mailboxes are to be used solely for the purpose of submitting settlement conference statements

and proposals, proposed papers (e.g., proposed orders, proposed jury instructions, proposed findings of fact and conclusions of law), default judgments, and proposed judgments as ordered by the assigned Judge. **This submission is in addition to any filing obligation.** All papers shall be clearly identified in the subject line of the sender's e-mail as follows: Settlement Conference Statement in [case number]; Proposed Order in [case number]; Plaintiff/Defendant's Proposed Jury Instructions in [case number]; Plaintiff/Defendant's Proposed Findings and Conclusions in [case number]; Default Judgment in [case number]; Proposed Judgment in [case number]; and, any other Court-ordered proposal in [case number].

**Chief Judge Timothy D. DeGiusti**  
[degiusti-orders@okwd.uscourts.gov](mailto:degiusti-orders@okwd.uscourts.gov)

**Judge Scott L. Palk**  
[palk-orders@okwd.uscourts.gov](mailto:palk-orders@okwd.uscourts.gov)

**Judge Charles B. Goodwin**  
[goodwin-orders@okwd.uscourts.gov](mailto:goodwin-orders@okwd.uscourts.gov)

**Judge Patrick R. Wyrick**  
[wyrick-orders@okwd.uscourts.gov](mailto:wyrick-orders@okwd.uscourts.gov)

**Judge Jodi W. Dishman**  
[dishman-orders@okwd.uscourts.gov](mailto:dishman-orders@okwd.uscourts.gov)

**Judge Bernard M. Jones**  
[jones-orders@okwd.uscourts.gov](mailto:jones-orders@okwd.uscourts.gov)

**Judge David L. Russell**  
[russell-orders@okwd.uscourts.gov](mailto:russell-orders@okwd.uscourts.gov)

**Judge Stephen P. Friot**  
[friot-orders@okwd.uscourts.gov](mailto:friot-orders@okwd.uscourts.gov)

**Judge Joe Heaton**  
[heaton-orders@okwd.uscourts.gov](mailto:heaton-orders@okwd.uscourts.gov)

**Magistrate Judge Shon T. Erwin**  
[erwin-orders@okwd.uscourts.gov](mailto:erwin-orders@okwd.uscourts.gov)

**Magistrate Judge Suzanne Mitchell**  
[mitchell-orders@okwd.uscourts.gov](mailto:mitchell-orders@okwd.uscourts.gov)

**Magistrate Judge Amanda Maxfield Green**  
[green-orders@okwd.uscourts.gov](mailto:green-orders@okwd.uscourts.gov)

**Magistrate Judge Chris Stephens**  
[stephens-orders@okwd.uscourts.gov](mailto:stephens-orders@okwd.uscourts.gov)

- c. Proposed sealed orders shall be submitted to:  
  
[sealed\\_proposed\\_orders@okwd.uscourts.gov](mailto:sealed_proposed_orders@okwd.uscourts.gov).

**Do not send any sealed document directly to a Judge's designated mailbox.**

- 3. Writ, Warrant, or Summons.** A party moving for issuance of a writ, warrant, or summons shall prepare the writ, warrant, or summons in a format compatible with Microsoft Word and submit these documents along with any required proposed order.
- 4. Default Judgment.** After the filing of the appropriate motion(s), a proposed Clerk's entry of default and any proposed judgment of

default shall be submitted to the designated mailbox for the assigned Judge indicated in § II.G.2.b.

## **H. PRIVACY.**

- 1. Documents to be Filed Under Seal.** Leave of Court is required to file a document or a portion of a document under seal, which shall be requested by filing a motion and submitting a proposed order granting the relief. In civil cases, the motion requesting leave should not ordinarily be filed under seal and therefore should state only in a general way the reason for the request (*e.g.*, the document contains privileged, sensitive, or personal information). If the motion is granted, the filer shall electronically file the sealed document. If only a portion of a document should be filed under seal (such as an exhibit to a motion), only that portion shall be filed under seal. For example, if Exhibit 14 to a motion for summary judgment should be sealed, the motion and exhibits should be filed electronically with the following notation at Exhibit 14: “Exhibit 14 filed under seal pursuant to Court order issued [date].” Exhibit 14 should then be electronically filed as a separate sealed document. If the document including the sealed exhibits is more than 40 pages, see § II.A.5.

- 2. Redacted Documents.**

- a. As set forth in Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 5.2 and/or Federal Rule of Criminal Procedure 49.1, filers shall omit or,



where inclusion is necessary, partially redact the following personal data identifiers from all electronically filed pleadings, papers, and exhibits, unless otherwise ordered:

- i. Minors' names: Identify only by the minor's initials;
- ii. Financial account numbers: Identify the name or type of account and the financial institution where maintained, but use only the last four numbers of the account number;
- iii. Social Security numbers: Use only the last four numbers;
- iv. Dates of birth: Use only the year; and
- v. Addresses: In criminal matters, include only the city and state of a home address.

These provisions do not apply to official transcripts of court proceedings, which are governed by General Order 08-03, Local Civil Rule 5.2.1 and Local Criminal Rule 49.1.1.

- b. The filer may omit or, where inclusion is necessary, partially redact the following confidential information from all electronically filed pleadings, papers, and exhibits, unless the assigned Judge orders otherwise:

- i. Personal identifying number, such as driver's license number;
- ii. Medical records, treatment, and diagnosis;
- iii. Employment history;
- iv. Individual financial information; and
- v. Proprietary or trade secret information.

- 3. Unredacted Documents.** Consistent with the Federal Rules of Civil and Criminal Procedure, leave of Court may be granted to file under

seal a document containing unredacted personal data identifiers listed above.

- a. The party seeking to file an unredacted document shall file a motion to file the document under seal.
- b. If the motion is granted, the filer (other than a *pro se* litigant) shall electronically file the unredacted document using the Court's ECF System.
- c. The assigned Judge may require the filer to file a redacted copy for the public record. The redacted document shall be clearly identified as a redacted version.

**4. Responsibility to Redact.** The responsibility for redacting personal data identifiers rests solely with counsel and the parties. The Clerk will not review documents for compliance with this rule, seal documents containing personal data identifiers, or redact documents.

**I. PRO SE LITIGANTS.**

*Pro se* litigants shall file paper originals of all complaints, pleadings, motions, affidavits, briefs, and other documents. The Clerk will scan these original documents but will retain the paper original only if it is illegible or is needed as a courtesy copy.

**J. SOCIAL SECURITY AND IMMIGRATION CASES.**

1. Absent a showing of good cause, all documents in Social Security and immigration cases shall be filed and noticed electronically.

2. To address the privacy issues inherent in Social Security and immigration cases, remote access to the individual documents will be limited. *See* Fed. R. Civ. P. 5.2(c). Docket sheets, however, will be remotely available to non-parties.

**K. PETITIONS FOR WRIT OF HABEAS CORPUS**

If the state court record is filed in a habeas case, it shall be filed electronically. State court records, or portions thereof, that cannot be electronically filed shall be filed conventionally and the filer shall electronically file a Notice of Conventional Filing. A model form is on the Court's website at [www.okwd.uscourts.gov/forms.htm](http://www.okwd.uscourts.gov/forms.htm).

Notwithstanding § II.B.2, if a pro se litigant in a habeas case is not otherwise entitled to receive a copy of the state court record, such litigant will not receive a paper copy of the state court record when it is electronically filed.

**III. PUBLIC ACCESS TO THE ECF SYSTEM**

**A. PUBLIC ACCESS AT THE COURT.**

The public may access the electronic docket and documents filed on the ECF System at no charge at the Clerk's Office during regular business hours (generally, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.). A copy fee for an electronic reproduction is required in accordance with 28 U.S.C. § 1914.

**B. REMOTE ACCESS.**

1. **PACER.** Remote electronic access to the ECF System is limited to subscribers to the PACER system. The Judicial Conference of the

United States has ruled that a user fee will be charged for remotely accessing case information, such as filed documents and docket sheets in civil cases. Such fees do not apply to the initial viewing of a document served via an NEF. If, however, the document is again remotely accessed through PACER, a fee will be incurred.

- 2. Public Access to Criminal Case Records.** Only attorneys of record who have logged in using their user name and password will have remote access to papers filed before November 1, 2004 in criminal cases; remote public access to docket sheets in all criminal cases, however, is available. In addition, remote public access to publicly-available documents filed on or after November 1, 2004 is available.
- 3. Sealed and Restricted Documents.** Sealed documents, Presentence Reports, Statements of Reasons, Violation Reports, and other restricted documents filed in criminal cases may be remotely accessed only by counsel for the government and counsel for the applicable defendant. Sealed and restricted documents filed in civil cases may be remotely accessed only by active counsel for participants in the case. To remotely view these documents from the NEF, counsel should use their user name and password.

### **C. CONVENTIONAL COPIES AND CERTIFIED COPIES.**

Conventional copies and certified copies of electronically filed documents may be purchased at the Clerk's Office. The fee for copying and certifying will be in accordance with 28 U.S.C. § 1914.

## **IV. GLOSSARY OF TERMS.**

### **Conventional Filing or Conventionally Submitted Document:**

a filing submitted in paper or other non-electronic, tangible format.

### **Electronic Case Filing or Electronic Filing:**

submitting a pleading, document, or other paper using the Court's Internet-based system (the ECF System) for filing in the Court's case file. Sending a paper to the Clerk or the assigned Judge via e-mail or fax does not constitute "electronic filing."

### **Electronic Signature:**

a digital version of an actual signature.

### **Flatten:**

remove metadata from a .pdf document.

### **Notice of Electronic Filing ("NEF"):**

the notice generated by the ECF System when a document is filed. The NEF constitutes the official file stamp. It includes information about what was filed, the text of the docket entry, the unique document stamp, and a list of case participants who will receive e-mail notification of the filing and a list of those who will not. The NEF contains a hyperlink to the filed document that permits the viewer to access the document **one time** through PACER without incurring charges. To do so, the

recipient of the NEF **must** access the document **within 15 days of receipt** using the **document number hyperlink** rather than the hyperlink for the case number. Selecting the case number hyperlink will cause PACER charges to be incurred.

**PACER:**

PACER is the Federal Judiciary's system for Public Access to Court Electronic Records. A PACER account is required to retrieve documents from the ECF System after the initial transmission of an NEF. To register for a PACER account, visit the PACER Service Center's website at [www.pacer.gov](http://www.pacer.gov).

**Password:**

the series of letters, numbers, and/or symbols designated by registrants to access their PACER accounts.

**Pay.gov:**

on-line payment option available only to authorized users.

**Portable Document Format (.pdf) File:**

a file that will look the same on the screen and in print, regardless of what kind of computer or printer is used and regardless of what software package was originally used to create it.

***Pro se* Litigants or *Pro se* Parties:**

parties proceeding without attorney representation.

**Remote Access:**

offsite access to the Court's ECF System.

**Scanned Document:**

an image recorded by an electronic device (a “scanner”). The filing party is responsible for the legibility of the scanned document. Documents containing text should be scanned using optical character reader, which is an option in your scanner preferences.

**Scanning a Document:**

the act of creating an image that is recorded by an electronic device (a “scanner”).

**Text-searchable:**

the reader can search for a word or phrase within the document. A Microsoft Word document that is saved as a .pdf document should automatically be text-searchable. A document that is scanned to .pdf format will need to use optical character reader, which is an option in your scanner preferences.

**50 Megabytes (MB):**

50 million bytes. A byte is the basic unit of information in computer storage and processing. Documents that are computer-generated require fewer bytes than the equivalent pages of a scanned document. Likewise, documents that are text only use fewer bytes than graphics or photographs.

**User Name:**

a series of letters and/or numbers.

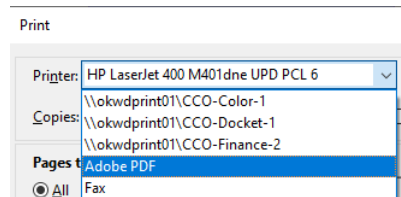
**V. HOW TO FLATTEN A .PDF FILE**

A fillable .pdf form allows the insertion of text into an existing template. The ECF System does not automatically remove the metadata from the document when it is uploaded, so the document is still editable after it has been electronically filed. To avoid filing an editable

document, the filer must flatten the .pdf document (*i.e.*, remove the metadata) prior to uploading it to the ECF System.

To flatten a .pdf file:

1. Open the .pdf document in Adobe Acrobat or other program that works with .pdf files.
2. Print the .pdf file to a .pdf printer (CTRL+P will pull up the print settings. Select from the drop-down “Adobe PDF” or click File > Print > select Adobe PDF or another .pdf printer listed in the drop-down list).



3. Save the printed .pdf document and upload it for filing.

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE  
WESTERN DISTRICT OF OKLAHOMA

\_\_\_\_\_) )  
 \_\_\_\_\_) )  
 Plaintiff(s), )  
 v. ) Case No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_) )  
 Defendant(s) )

**ENTRY OF APPEARANCE**

To the Clerk of this court and all parties of record:  
 Enter my appearance as counsel in this case for:  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
(Plaintiff/Defendant) (Name of Party)

Blue Boxes = editable (non-flattened)

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE  
WESTERN DISTRICT OF OKLAHOMA

\_\_\_\_\_) )  
 \_\_\_\_\_) )  
 Plaintiff(s), )  
 v. ) Case No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_) )  
 Defendant(s) )

**ENTRY OF APPEARANCE**

To the Clerk of this court and all parties of record:  
 Enter my appearance as counsel in this case for:  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
(Plaintiff/Defendant) (Name of Party)

Yellow or white boxes = not editable (flattened)

If the .pdf file has not been properly flattened or if it contains metadata not related to filling out a form, the filer may receive this error message:



ERROR: Document is malformed or contains code which may cause an external action (such as launching an application). This PDF document cannot be accepted.

Click [here](#) for more information.

If you need further assistance, please contact the court.

Error File: C:\fakepath\17-NEAL 1-25.pdf

Flattening the document removes metadata that is incompatible with the ECF System.